



WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

ASHLAND, BAYFIELD, BURNETT, DOUGLAS, IRON, PRICE, RUSK, SAWYER, TAYLOR, WASHBURN

April
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Lower Unemployment Rates for Northwest Wisconsin in March

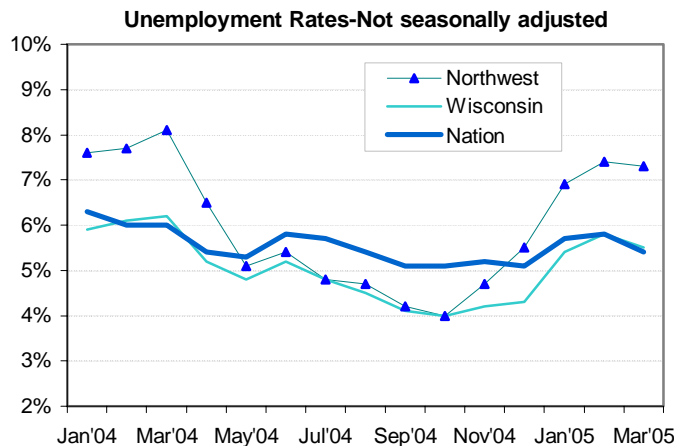
March winds brought lower unemployment rates to Northwest Wisconsin and the state. The unemployment rate in Northwest Wisconsin dropped from 7.4 percent in February to 7.3 percent in March. However, unemployment rates declined during the month in only six of the ten counties in the northwest region and the regional rate is still considerably higher than

unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) in the state and the nation of 5.5 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively.

The counties with lower unemployment rates were those that depend most on snow to sustain tourism workers through mid-March. The unemployment rate in Bayfield County declined from 7.9 percent in February to 7.3 percent in March. In Burnett,

the rate dropped from 8.0 percent to 7.6 percent, in Douglas the rate declined from 6.3 to 6.1 percent, and the largest reduction in the region and third largest in the state occurred in Iron County where the rate dropped from 8.4 percent in February to 7.7 percent in March. In spite of a reduction in unemployment rate in Sawyer County from 9.2 to 8.7 percent the county had the 3rd highest rate in the state and Washburn County where the rate declined from 8.9 to 8.3 percent was ranked 8th highest in the state.

Four northwest counties were among only six in the state that experienced a rise in unemployment rate in March. Price and Taylor counties showed the greatest increase in the state in March when the unemployment rate rose 0.4 percentage points during the month. In Taylor County, the unemployment rate increased from 7.9 percent in February to 8.3 percent in March while in Price the rate increased from 5.4 to 5.8 per-



	Jan'04	Feb'04	Mar'04	Jan'05	Feb'05	Mar'05
Northwest	7.6%	7.7%	8.1%	6.9%	7.4%	7.3%
Wisconsin	5.9%	6.1%	6.2%	5.4%	5.8%	5.5%
Nation	6.3%	6.0%	6.0%	5.7%	5.8%	5.4%

Civilian Labor Force Estimates* for Northwest Wisconsin counties: March 2005

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04
Labor force	10,231	10,190	10,205	9,086	9,140	9,069	8,131	8,152	8,279	23,438	23,648	23,661	4,270	4,346	4,413
Employed	9,556	9,551	9,452	8,420	8,416	8,329	7,514	7,496	7,637	21,998	22,162	21,927	3,940	3,983	3,997
Unemployed	675	639	753	666	724	740	617	656	642	1,440	1,486	1,734	330	363	416
% unemployed	6.6	6.3	7.4	7.3	7.9	8.2	7.6	8.0	7.8	6.1	6.3	7.3	7.7	8.4	9.4

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04
Labor force	8,868	8,795	8,677	7,476	7,530	7,728	8,406	8,497	8,543	11,058	11,084	11,411	7,999	8,070	8,162
Employed	8,351	8,322	8,097	6,768	6,840	6,958	7,671	7,719	7,729	10,144	10,204	10,486	7,336	7,351	7,410
Unemployed	517	473	580	708	690	770	735	778	814	914	880	925	663	719	752
% unemployed	5.8	5.4	6.7	9.5	9.2	10.0	8.7	9.2	9.5	8.3	7.9	8.1	8.3	8.9	9.2

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - March 2005

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04
Total Nonfarm	8.9	8.8	8.7	3.8	3.8	3.6	5.0	4.9	5.0	17.4	17.4	17.7	2.1	2.2	2.2
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2
Manufacturing	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.3
Trade	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.9	2.9	2.9	0.3	0.4	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.2	2.2	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Financial Activities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.8	1.8	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.1	2.1	2.1	0.4	0.4	0.4
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	2.9	2.8	3.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	3.1	3.2	3.2	0.4	0.4	0.4
	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04	Mar '05	Feb '05	Mar '04
Total Nonfarm	7.0	6.9	6.6	5.6	5.7	5.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	9.1	9.1	9.2	5.9	5.9	5.9
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Manufacturing	2.6	2.6	2.4	1.9	1.9	1.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	2.7	2.8	2.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Trade	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.5	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.9	0.9	0.9
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9
Leisure & Hospitality	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.7	1.5	1.5	1.3	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total Government	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2004 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

cent. In Rusk County the rate rose from 9.2 percent in February to 9.5 percent in March, the highest rate in the state, even though it was down from the 10.0 percent unemployed from one year ago. In Ashland County the unemployment rate rose from 6.3 to 6.6 percent.

Unemployment rates dropped in counties where the number of unemployed declined and contributed to a reduction in the region of unemployed residents. The total number of unemployed in Northwest Wisconsin declined from 7,400 in February to 7,270 in March. The reduction in unemployed, however, did not lead to an increase in the number of employed. In fact, the number of employ residents in March declined by 340 jobholders to 91,700 in a total labor force of 98,960.

The smaller number of employed in the region

runs contrary to the increase of 250 nonfarm jobs with area employers. It is not uncommon for the two sets of employment series to run in opposing directions especially in months where there are a lot of seasonal changes affecting the labor market. Labor force estimates are based on survey information gathered during the week that includes the 12th (that was the second week in March) while job estimates are based on survey information and historic trends for the month.

The greatest increase in jobs was from employers in the information, professional and business services industry group. This group includes employers that provide temporary workers to other employers (specially manufacturing plants) and telemarketing firms. The group added 140 jobs in March and has over 200

more jobs than one year ago.

All industry sectors except manufacturing and transportation and utilities added jobs in March and all industry sectors except manufacturing and government have more workers than one year ago. There were 170 more manufacturing jobs one year ago and 100 more government jobs. Most of the losses in manufacturing occurred in Douglas and Taylor counties and most of the government losses occurred in Douglas County. Douglas County job count is down by 260 jobs since March 2004 while the overall job losses in Taylor County totaled 60.

The total number of jobs in the northwest region in March was 71,560 up from the 71,300 reported in February and from the 71,100 in March 2004.



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